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THE

JUDGMENT SEAT OF CHRIST,

A SERMON,

PREACHED IN THE WESLEYAN CHAPEL AT GUYSBOROUGH, ON
SUNDAY 7th OF JANUARY, 1833.

BY ROBERT COONEY,

Wesleyan Missionary.

HALIFAX, N. S.

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THIS SERMON,
IS RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED,
TO
THE WESLEYAN MISSIONARIES,
OF THE NOVA-SCOTIA DISTRICT;
BY THEIR HUMBLE SERVANT, AND FELLOW LABOURER.
ROBERT COONEY.

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S E R M O N.

TEXT---2d. CORINTHIANS, CHAPTER V. part of 10th verse.

"For we must all appear before the Judgment Seat of Christ."

THE mere recital of the momentous truth announced in the text, should be regarded by every soul in this congregation, as the echo of that voice, which "*breaketh the cedars of Lebanon,*" and "*divideth the flames of fire.*" Sometimes I appear before you to unravel the web of inspired prophecy; and to shew that the occurrences of past ages, and the transactions of our own day, mutually reflect "the light of the KNOWLEDGE of the glory of God, in the face of Jesus Christ." On other occasions, it becomes my duty to spread the balm of Gilead over the hearts of those who are mourning in Zion; and very often, am I required to comfort the minds of such believers as are enduring affliction, by explaining the promises, and constructing from them, perspective views of "The New Jerusalem," into which, they and all "the ransomed of the Lord," shall soon be admitted, "with songs, and everlasting joy upon their heads." While thus communing together in the sanctuary, our fellowship is made sweet; he "who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks," appeareth in our midst; the pulpit resembles a throne of light; and the chapel becomes like the gate of heaven.

But on the present occasion, the place I occupy, is covered with the blackness and darkness of Mount Sinai; the preacher assumes the form of a prophet; and the bearer of glad tidings, comes to lay before you facts of a very grave and awful description. Under the short, but comprehensive sentence, my brethren, which affirmeth that "it is appointed unto men once to die, but after that the Judgment"—in these few but absorbing words, are comprised an epitome of human life, and an intimation of human responsibility. But least this should not be sufficient to awaken us to a due preparation for our latter end, the Almighty has never ceased, by a variety of means, to remind us of that day, when the olive branch of peace shall be superseded by the sword of Justice—when the sceptre of

mercy shall be exchanged for the scales of the sanctuary—when he who is now our advocate, shall become our Judge—and when the throne of grace shall make way for “THE JUDGMENT SEAT OF CHRIST.”

These mysterious changes form the subject of a very ancient prophecy ; for Enoch, the seventh from Adam, declares, as quoted by the Apostle Jude, “ Behold the Lord cometh with ten thousand of his saints, to execute judgment upon all ; and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds, which they have ungodly committed ; and of all their hard speeches, which ungodly sinners have spoken against him.” And the prophet Malachi, closes the canon of the Old Testament scriptures, with a similar prediction, recorded in characters of living flame. “ For, behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven ; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble ; and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch.”* Here a profound silence commences, which subsists for nearly four hundred years, at the expiration of which, the voice of Jesus breaks in upon the stillness, and confirms all these impressive warnings.” “ *Marvel not at this : for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth ; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life ; and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of damnation.* John, v : 28, 29.

And now, my beloved, praying that God may enable us to “ receive with meekness the ingrafted word, which is able to save our souls”—I shall endeavour to set before you the three objects, the contemplation of which, is suggested in the text—namely, **THE JUDGMENT SEAT OF CHRIST ; THOSE WHO SHALL APPEAR BEFORE IT : AND THE SENTENCE WHICH SHALL BE PRONOUNCED AT THE CONCLUSION OF THE TRIAL.**

First.—THE JUDGMENT SEAT OF CHRIST.

This august tribunal is to be set up in the name of Christ ; its foundations shall be laid in his eternal justice ; and its erection shall grow out of his power. This court will be hallowed by the purity of the Judge ; and the brightness of his glory shall irradiate it. It is emphatically called “ The Judgment Seat of Christ,” because “ The Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son,” and this prerogative to judge the world is surrendered to Christ, “ That all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father.” Saint Paul adverts to this judicial pre-eminence, which shall hereafter accrue to our Lord, as one of the

* This referred in a primary sense to the destruction of Jerusalem.

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recompenses of his mediatorial humility ; and makes it the motive of a very powerful appeal, in which he sets before his son Timothy, the necessity of being unremitting in the performance of those duties, whereunto God hath called him. 2 Timothy, iv : 1, 2. But :—

The time when this court shall be opened, and the place where it shall be erected, deserve our consideration.

These questions are involved in profound mystery ; clouds and darkness are round about them ; and they are discoverable only to the eye of that wisdom, which devised, that God should become a man ; that the Creator should become a creature, and that he, whom Pilate sentenced to be crucified, as a malefactor, should at his second coming, shake terribly the earth, and judge both the living and the dead. "But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no—not the angels of heaven, but the Father only." Before this tribunal, however, shall be opened, all the prophecies shall receive their fulfillment ; and the gospel shall be preached unto all nations. The celestial ambassador, whom John saw flying "in the midst of heaven," shall accomplish the object of his mission ; and all "that dwell on the earth," shall hear, in their own multifarious dialects and languages, of "the wonderful works of God." Then shall the Son of Man come to seal the destiny of creation, and to determine the fate of the human race for ever and ever. "And this gospel of the kingdom, shall be preached in all the world, for a witness unto all nations ; and then shall the end come." Matt. xxiv : 14. *A number of pious conjectures are indulged*, touching the place where Christ shall hold the last assize of mankind. Some are of opinion, that the valley of Jehoshaphat, will be the arena of this universal assembly ; and to support their theory, they quote the address of certain angels to the disciples, at the time of our Saviour's ascension. This valley winds round the base of Mount Olivet, from the summit of which, the Messiah went up into heaven. As he ascended to resume the glory he had with the Father "before the world was," his bereaved followers "looked steadfastly towards heaven," but while they were endeavouring to gratify their eyes, and regale their hearts, by contemplating the receding form of their adorable master, two men stood by them in white apparel, and thus accosted them. "*Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven ? this same Jesus, which is taken from you into heaven, shall come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.*" Acts i : 11.

But another class of opinionists maintain that "THE JUDGMENT SEAT OF CHRIST," shall be set up in the air ; and as a reason for their faith in this particular instance, they adduce the comfortable doctrine, preached by the Apostle, in order to remove the unreasonable fears of the disquieted Thessalonians. "For the Lord

himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the Archangel, and with the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first. Then we which are alive and remain, shall be caught up together with them into the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air, and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words." Thess. iv : 16, 17, 18. Again---

Let us attend to the character and qualifications of the Judge.

The person who shall preside on this eventful occasion, is Jesus Christ; one every way qualified to sustain the office, which the Father hath ordained him to execute. He is OMNIPOTENT, and therefore, his authority cannot be resisted, nor will there be any possibility of evading the sentence he pronounces. "He doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth; and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?" Daniel, iv : 35. We may reject the offers of salvation, and despise the riches of his goodness and forbearance, and long suffering; but we cannot escape from his justice, or withstand his power. Here, the authority of Judges and Magistrates is often set at nought. Demagogues and partisans frequently contrive, by their address and influence, to neutralise the moral rigour of the courts; and when a spirit of resistance ariseth in the hearts of the people, and stretcheth out its arm against the government, neither the ordinary courts of law, nor military tribunals, nor the most formidable armaments, no—my brethren, nor all of them in their concentrated efficiency, can stem the fierce and impetuous tide of national resistance. Like a mountain torrent it rushes forth turmoiling and driving every thing before it; nor does its fury subside till it dashes into fragments all the institutions of the country. But to Jesus Christ, is all power given, both in heaven and on earth; and the countless myriads which shall be arraigned before him, could they even organize a physical and intellectual combination, will be as incapable of resisting his authority, as the feeblest infant is unable to wrench the sun out of the firmament, or to quench the lights that burn round the throne of the Almighty.

"We must from God be driven,
Or with our Saviour dwell;
Must come at his command to heaven,
Or else—depart to hell."

OMNISCIENCY is another qualification of this divine Judge. "He is perfect in knowledge," and "His understanding is infinite." Jesus Christ, my brethren, is continually scrutinizing every part of our inward and outward conduct, "For his eyes are upon the ways of man, and he seeth all his goings." Job, xxxiv : 21. And the reflection, that we must one day give an account of all our thoughts,

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words and actions, to one so capable of penetrating every disguise, and of searching the inmost recesses of the soul, should exercise a salutary influence over us. He knows every thought of the heart as soon as it is conceived; he hears and understands all our words, no matter in what language they are conveyed, or how cautiously soever they are articulated; and he sees all our actions, though performed in secrecy, and under the covering of the night. *“He that planted the ear, shall he not hear? He that formed the eye, shall he not see? He that teacheth man knowledge, shall he not know?”*—Psalm xciv : 9, 10. In this disordered world, the most astute or enlightened Judge, may be deceived by the agreeable manners, and imposing demeanour of a prisoner; and if this should not be sufficient to obtain credit for his pretensions, the forensic sophistry of his advocate will supply the deficiency; and procure for him such a verdict, as will give him a right to inscribe “honesty” on his escutcheon. But in the day of judgment none will think of resorting to these expedients, for every one will then be convinced that *“THE LORD SEETH NOT AS MAN SEETH; FOR MAN LOOKETH ON THE OUTWARD APPEARANCE; BUT THE LORD LOOKETH ON THE HEART.”* 1 Sam. xvi : 7.

But our blessed Lord is also infinitely just; and here we have the fullest assurance that he will administer justice in the most exemplary manner. *“A God of truth, and without iniquity, just and right is he.”* The designs of Justice are often frustrated by the very persons who are appointed and paid to dispense it. Bribery has often inclined the heart of a Judge to favour a rich delinquent:—titled libertines, whose crimes have cancelled their patents of nobility, have been comforted with the tender sympathies of the bench,—while the misguided poor have been crushed by its austerity, under the semblance of virtuous indignation. Rapine, fraud, and oppression, have been fostered by judicial patronage, because they were perpetrated “in high places;” but the crimes which have resulted from the powerful instigations of poverty, have been visited with the heaviest chastisements, because the culprits were miserable and wretched. The same cause has frequently warped the integrity of Jurors, and polluted the sanctity of a Jury box. Even the English Bench, the purity of which is proverbial, has been degraded by the infamy of a Tressillian, and a Jeffries; and history records the names of others, whose judicial depravity has defiled the streams of Justice in their very source. “But shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?” YES—YES—is the universal response. And why? Because *“HE IS EXCELLENT IN POWER, AND IN JUDGMENT, AND IN PLENTY OF JUSTICE.”* Job, xxxvii : 23.

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Again—Allow me to occupy your reflections, by adverting to the rules and usages which shall be observed in this Court.

The judicial proceedings of the Judgment day, are glowingly described in two remarkable visions ; and it is a notable coincidence, that these two visions have been granted to two illustrious captives. Daniel, during his captivity at Babylon, beheld the four winds of heaven contending upon the great sea ; and while he was striving to account for this singular conflict, he saw four beasts issue from the convulsed ocean ; one resembling a lion, the second like unto a bear, the third having the form of a leopard, and the fourth of an appearance, "dreadful and terrible." These emblematical beasts, denote so many belligerent nations, struggling for political ascendancy, which the fourth one obtains by subjugating all the rest. A theocracy or religious government, is said to grow up from among the ten horns of the beast, whose aspect is "dreadful and terrible." This is also represented by a horn, having "eyes like the eyes of a man" and "a mouth speaking great things"—an intimation that this sacerdotal state would be distinguished for subtlety, and arrogance. For a while, these political and ecclesiastical contentions distract the world ; but the end comes—the kingdom of God rules over all—and the kings and pontiffs, who made the nations quail before them, are required to give an account unto him "by whom kings reign, and princes decree Justice." I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like pure wool ; his throne was like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire. A fiery stream issued and came forth from before him : thousand^d thousands ministered unto him ; and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him : the Judgment was set, and the books were opened. Dan. vii : 9, 10.

The beloved disciple moreover, was comforted amidst the privations of Patmos, by a luminous panorama of the Day of Judgment. He was now a banished man, enduring a painful exile, because he preferred the favour of God, to the patronage of Domitian. The venerable sufferer however, repined not, for he knew that he would soon be "where the wicked cease from troubling ;" but he was deeply grieved, at beholding a violent persecution, coming upon the church, like a flood. He sees Satan issuing out of his prison, his mouth emitting a flame of fire, and his heart swelling with rage against the people of God. The eye of the proscribed Apostle pursues the deceiver, as he goes forth, to fight against the Most High, followed by Gog and Magog, and all the hosts of the wicked, "the number of whom is as the sand of the sea." He sees this immense army compassing "the camp of the Saints," and his soul groans bitterly, as their haughty leader advances, and commands them to surrender. But his spirit is refreshed for—the banner of the cross

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waves in ample folds over the heads of the besieged, while a voice from heaven animates them, saying, "RESIST THE DEVIL, AND HE WILL FLEE FROM YOU." The whole Church devoutly raise their eyes, when, to their unspeakable joy, they see a person "glorious in his apparel" riding through the sky "upon a white horse," and holding forth the victor's crown, while he exclaims—"Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life."

And then they all lift up *their voices* and cry, "Though an host should encamp against us, we shall not fear," The Lord, whom we worship, "is a man of war," he hath triumphed gloriously; the horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea," &c. "Through God we shall do valiantly: for he it is, that shall tread down our enemies." And whiles they are defying their assailants, and rejoicing in the strength of God, behold fire comes down out of heaven and devours the besiegers; and the devil that deceived them, and the beast and the false prophet are cast into heli. This discomfiture of Christ's enemies, is immediately followed by the opening of his tribunal that they may be judged. "And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it; and I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged out of those things, which were written in the books, according to their works."—Rev. xx: 11, 12.

Here then, my beloved, are the principles upon which this great trial shall be conducted; here are its rules and modes of evidence; and according to the testimony adducible from these various books, shall we all be either justified, or condemned. In that day we shall all be tried, JEWS, GENTILES, CHRISTIANS, yea—and HEATHENS, according to our works, and by what shall be found written in the book of God's omniscience—in the book of his remembrance,—in the book of his revelation; and in the book of the sinner's conscience.

Further—The absolute authority of this divine tribunal, will be one of its most distinguishing traits.

Every civilized nation has a variety of courts, graduated on a scale of degrees; and each court enjoys a rank among the legal institutions of the country, commensurate with the importance of the questions they are empowered to try and adjudicate. Persons cited into the inferior courts, have the right of appealing from their decision, and of bringing their cause under the consideration of a higher court, by an instrument, called a *Certio vari*. This feature in our Judicature is highly beneficial, for it affords to the people a mode of redress; and to the more enlightened Judges, an opportunity of correcting mistakes, and of revoking decisions, that should not

have been pronounced. "But "THE JUDGMENT SEAT OF CHRIST" is the highest of all tribunals—and the Judge himself, is far above all principalities and powers. There will be no possibility of procuring a repeal of its sentence; and all its decrees will remain, and operate with undiminished force forever. Now indeed, we have Two courts of appeal, the "THRONE OF GRACE," and "THE MERCY SEAT." These are accessible to every soul. Repentance and Faith are our *Certiorari*; and through him 'whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation,' we may now procure such a reversion of the sentence, passed upon us in the Court of Justice, as will remove the awarded punishment, as far from us "as the East is from the West." But if we neglect these gracious advantages, then nothing will remain for us, "But a certain fearful looking for of Judgment, and fiery indignation which shall devour the adversaries. Heb. x : 27. I shall now endeavour to introduce the persons—

SECONDLY—THAT SHALL APPEAR BEFORE "THE JUDGMENT SEAT OF CHRIST."

ALL both small and great, will have to encounter this solemn interview with Christ. None or so mean or insignificant, as not to have some talents and graces to answer for; nor are there any great enough to elude their responsibility. ALL of every nation shall be here. The polished inhabitants of Europe; the voluptuous natives of Asia; the persecuted children of Afric; and the enterprising people of America. ALL of every dispensation—Patriarchs, Jews, and Christians. ALL of every religious creed and profession. Roman Catholics, and Protestants; Dissenters, and Churchmen; Arminians and Calvinists; Methodists and Baptists; Unitarians, Socinians, and Mahometans. ALL of every grade in society. Emperors and Kings; Princes and Pontiffs; Prelates and Lords; Priests and Laymen. ALL, from the lordly rulers of an hundred provinces, down to the slave that toils in the mill, and to the captive that languishes in the dungeon. In a word ALL, from Adam the progenitor of mankind, down to the last person that shall have appeared in the flesh.

But, before this inconceivable multitude will be assembled together, *a great many changes shall take place.* There shall be signs and wonders in heaven above, and in the earth beneath, and in the waters under the earth; "blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke." "The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and terrible day of the Lord come."

The Universe as it now exists, presents a most beautiful scene, abounding in all the attractions and varieties of a most gorgeous landscape. The sky above us, is painted in azure and gold; it is profusely gemmed with shining pearls, and adorned in the

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centre with a superb fountain of light, from which streams of beauty and glory are constantly proceeding. Innumerable lakes and rivers are pursuing their undeviating course, and as they rush through the intersecting glens, or calmly breathe through the valleys, they water the earth and perpetuate its fruitfulness. Seas and oceans are rolling on, bearing upon their bosom the ships of every nation. Splendour and music maintain a wide dominion; every bush sustains a warbler; melody sweet and various, is heard in every grove; and a thousand cascades and waterfalls complete the universal anthem, which all nature performs unto God. Again, the earth is dotted all over with kingdoms and commonwealths; provinces and cities. These comprise superb squares, magnificent promenades, spacious streets; and these again, are built up with churches dedicated "to the only true and wise God." Temples and shrines inscribed "to the Lord's many, and Gods many," whom the heathens, "ignorantly worship." With arcades and bazaars, wherein are sold toys and baubles. Theatres and saloons, where as much is expended every evening, to witness a mimicry of human life, or to gratify a sensual desire, as would feed a starving family for a year. With palaces, prisons, and hospitals, the respective dwellings of the wealthy, the vicious, and the indigent: and halls of legislation, courts of Justice, public baths, and museums, and colleges, set apart for the several purposes of national instruction, amusement, and protection.

And further, all these are enriched with the productions of genius, and the monuments of art; the trophies of war, and the acquisitions of research; the creations of science, the accumulations of industry, and the luxuries of commerce. But in a little while all this harmony will be deranged; and all this comeliness deformed. Yes, my beloved, *all* the continents and islands—*all* the kingdoms and cities of the world—yea, and all the worlds, planets, and globes that compose the stately fabric of nature, shall be engulfed in an ocean of liquid flame, over the highest billow of which "The Angel of the Lord" shall fly, summoning all mankind to appear before "THE JUDGMENT SEAT OF CHRIST." "The heavens and the earth which are now, are kept in store, reserved unto fire, against the Day of Judgment and perdition of ungodly men." 2d Peter iii: 7.

But there will also be individual and personal changes, as wonderful in their operation, and much greater in their consequences, than these to which I have adverted. "Behold," says the Apostle, "I shew you a mystery: we shall not all sleep, but we shall be changed. In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality." 1. Cor. xv: 51, 52, 53.

And besides—The ambitious man will suddenly find himself in the presence of a Judge, who was meek and lowly, while he is framing plans of future aggrandisement, the execution of which, would engross half a century. The sordid wretch, who made usury the business of his life, shall be dragged to "The Judgment seat" of him who has said, "when riches increase set not your heart upon them," at the very moment, he is striving to add field to field, and barn to barn. And the blasphemer will be hurried to the bar of that God who has said "swear not at all," preceded by a volley of oaths, the utterance of which, concluded his profane existence. And so forth.

But to return. The holy angels shall also be present at "The Judgment seat of Christ." These blessed spirits are now employed in ministering unto the heirs of salvation; and in variously executing the purposes of God: but in the day of Judgment, they shall be the train-bearers and attendants of the Judge, and also assessors with him. The hierarchs or chiefs of the heavenly host, who fought in heaven, "the good fight of faith" shall be there, to receive in the presence of assembled worlds, the reward of their fidelity. *And the fallen Angels*, who revolted against the authority of the Most High, shall also form a part of this multitudinous assembly: and that sentence, under which they have been suffering ever since they rebelled against their creator, shall now be publicly confirmed, by the universal Judge of both angels and men. "*And the Angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains, under darkness, unto the Judgment of the great day.*" Jude, i: 6.

But there are some, who deserve to be particularly noticed, for they shall appear very conspicuous before "The Judgment seat of Christ."—Here will be the DEVIL, the Old Serpent, that was cast out of Heaven; and there will be ADAM and EVE whom he tempted to eat the forbidden fruit. Here will be CAIN, who first shed human blood, and there will be ABEL, the innocent victim of a brother's barbarity. Here will be NOAH, the antediluvian preacher, and there will be his impenitent countrymen, who laughed at his zeal, and turned his piety into a theme for derision and ribaldry. Here will be MOSES, and the Israelites that came up out of Egypt; and there will be PHARAOH, and his army who were drowned in the Red Sea. Here will be BELSHAZZAR, the Chaldean, who degraded the vessels of God's temple into the appurtenances of a midnight revel: and there will be DANIEL, the prophet, who told the imperial sensualist, that his days were numbered, and his grave prepared. Here will be NEBUCHADNEZZAR, the autocrat of the East, and there will be SHADRACH, MESHACH, and ABEDNEGO, whom he cast into the fiery furnace, for refusing to worship the image which he had set up. Here will be CYRUS, the Persian, who emancipated the people of

God, and there will be ALEXANDER, the Macedonian, who strove to enslave all mankind.

Here will be the WISE MEN, who travelled from the East, to see "the King of the Jews;" and there will be that very KING, whom, when an infant, these philosophers adored in a stable, at Bethlehem. Here will be JOHN, the BAPTIST, who came to prepare the way of the Lord; and there will be HEROD, the KING, by whom he was beheaded to gratify a vindictive courtesan. Here will be JUDAS, the apostate, who betrayed his master for thirty pieces of silver, and then hanged himself in despair; and there will be PETER, who denied him with oaths and curses, but afterwards wept and repented. Here will be PILATE, the governor of Judea, who delivered up Christ to be crucified, in order to conciliate the Jews; and there will be PILATE'S WIFE, who implored her husband to have nothing to do with that just man. Here will be the ROMAN SOLDIER, who pierced the body of Jesus; and there will be JOSEPH, the COUNCILLOR, who buried that immaculate body in his own new tomb. Here will be STEPHEN, the martyr, who died, praying for his murderers, and there will be the INFATUATED MOB, that cast him out of the city and stoned him. Here will be THE ROMAN EMPERORS, and CONSULS, who did every thing in their power to exterminate the Church; and there will be THE PRIMITIVE CHRISTIANS, who patiently suffered, gallantly contended, and nobly died for "the faith once delivered to the Saints." Here will be VOLTAIRE, AND HOBBS, ROSSEAU, AND HUME, SPINOSA AND PAINE; and all the deistical philosophers, who employed their erudition and genius, to bewilder the understandings, and destroy the souls of men; and there will be WICKLIFFE, and LUTHER, and CALVIN, BAXTER and KNOX; WHITFIELD, and WESLEY; and all the zealous defenders and Preachers of the Gospel, who laboured incessantly "warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that they might present every man perfect in Christ Jesus."

*And there also will be the present congregation; As sure my brethren as God exists, myself and every soul in this chapel will have to appear before "The Judgment seat of Christ," that we may receive the things done in the body, according to what we have done, whether it be good or bad. Now if any of you were involved in a law suit, that effected even a portion of your property, would you not use every means in your power, in order to prepare for the trial; and to obtain a favourable verdict. You would.—Remember then that you are all involved in a trial that concerns your eternal salvation, and oh! let me request you—nay beseech you, to turn unto God with your whole heart: come unto him *as you are*, through Christ, but come unto him *now*, for you know not how soon your soul may be required of you, and rest not till his holy spirit beareth witness with your spirit, that he has pardoned and ac-*

repted you. This my brethren, will fully prepare us for the trial we must ALL pass through; this will enable us meet our Judge with joy, and not with sorrow. But

THIRDLY—LET US MEDITATE UPON THE SENTENCE WHICH SHALL BE PRONOUNCED AT THE CONCLUSION OF THIS IMPORTANT TRIAL.

The irrevocable decisions which shall terminate this final inquisition, are described by our Lord himself: and the anticipation of them will devoutly and profitably exercise the heart. These decisions shall turn upon the evidence of our works, as upon a pivot. We are justified freely in the day of conversion, by *faith alone*, without any reference whatsoever to our works: but in the Day of Judgment, we shall be *declaratively* justified by our works only; for they will be regarded as the fruits and evidences of our faith. And those, who shall not be able to produce the good works, which grow out of the faith that purifieth the heart, will be condemned; because their deficiency in this respect, will be a conviction of their having died in unbelief. "For we must all appear before THE JUDGMENT SEAT OF CHRIST; that every one may receive the things DONE in his body, according to that he hath DONE, whether it be good or bad." Let us then, my beloved, notice the inevitable consequences, which this sentence shall produce upon the just, and upon the unjust.

This sentence will give the Just admission into the Church triumphant.

Now, in order to set this advantage before you in a clear light:—to shew you its importance, and to exhibit as "a city set upon a hill, and which cannot be hid," let me suppose that there is a church, or society of christians established in a given part of this province. This church, let it be granted, is venerable for its antiquity; and beautiful on account of its holiness. Several who were formerly in its communion, were "the salt of the earth;"—the evangelical lustre of many shone like the brightness of the firmament; and a very large number received the crown of martyrdom. Further, this church is *now* in a very palmy and flourishing condition—like a tree planted by the rivers of water, its leaf is always green: and it beareth fruit every season. The members are all highly gifted, and eminently pious; the sanctity of the minister is proverbial; his preaching is "in demonstration of the Spirit, and in much assurance;"—and the conversation of both pastor and people, is a praise in all the earth. Now, admission into a church like this, would be a very great distinction; but how much greater is the moral and spiritual ele-

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vation, to which the Just shall be raised, when they shall be receiv-
ed into that "glorious church, which has neither spot, nor wrinkle,
nor blemish, nor any such thing." This church consists of Patri-
archs who believed the promises ; Prophets who foretold the things
that should come to pass in the latter days : Apostles who were co-
temporary with Jesus Christ : and Evangelists who compiled his
sacred memoirs. The glorious army of martyrs also, form a part
of it : and within its pale likewise, are all "the spirits of the Just
made perfect" and the "innumerable company of angels." All the
members of this church are "clothed with white robes and have
palms in their hands." Their altar is "the throne of God and the
Lamb"—"Psalms and hymns and spiritual songs" constitute their
liturgy—the hidden manna and water from the well of Bethlehem
form their sacraments—"they hunger no more, neither thirst any
more ; the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne feedeth them ;
all tears are wiped away from their eyes"—and JESUS himself,
who opened the Book with the seven seals, is their PRIEST and
PREACHER for ever and ever. O ! my brethren let us—

"Lift our eyes of faith and see,
Saints and angels joined in one ;
What a countless company,
Stand before yon dazzling throne ;
Each before his Saviour stands,
All in milk-white robes arrayed ;
Palms they carry in their hands,
Crowns of glory on their head."

It will also transform them into the likeness of Christ.

Come, spirit of burning come ; and quicken our conceptions—
that we may like Hosea, the son of Beeri, rightly use similitudes.
If any individual in this assembly, bore a very strong resemblance
to a great and powerful King, would not the coincidence render
him very remarkable. This monarch we'll suppose, is the *beau*
ideal of regal perfection. He is rightly endowed with all the
graces and virtues necessary to adorn a throne ; his mental accom-
plishments are numerous and profound ; and his personal attractions
are the theme of universal admiration. The suavity of his manners,
endear him to all who enjoy his intercourse ; and the wisdom and
philanthropy which characterize his administration, make him a
pattern of true statesmanship. His subjects revere him for his be-
nevolence and piety ; and foreigners number his friendship among
their distinctions. In a word—In this king are concentrated the
antiquity of Melchizedek—the poetry of David—the wisdom of
Solomon—the zeal of Josiah—and the renown of Augustus. Now,
to be in person and accomplishments, the counterpart of so cele-
brated a potentate, would be very honourable. But Jesus Christ,
is "KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS." "His throne is in the

heavens, and his kingdom ruleth over all. Principalities, powers, and dominions, are made subject unto him. "He is the high and lofty one that inhabiteth eternity." "He is the king eternal, immortal, and invisible." Yea, he is "The blessed and only potentate," for he "ruleth in the kingdom of men," and giveth it to whomsoever he will." And all the Just, even those who had been disfigured by the ravages of sickness; wasted by poverty; mutilated by war, and dismembered by the executioner; *all* of them, shall as a part of their reward, be transformed into the likeness of Jesus Christ, so that they shall, through all eternity, be so many uniform and beautiful editions of the wisdom, goodness, holiness, and omnipotence of their God. "For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself. Philippians, iii : 20, 21.

But this sentence will likewise bestow on the Just, an everlasting inheritance in heaven

In this sin-disordered world, where there is "no continuing city," the most indefeasible possessions are held by very doubtful tenures; and at best, the short time which the proprietors are allowed to occupy them, considerably impair their value. Besides—some are cheated out of their property by swindlers and sharpers; frequently a large inheritance is swallowed up by expensive litigation; vast estates are often forfeited by treasonable practices; immense fortunes are sometimes suspended upon the turning up of a card, or the rattling of dice; and the fluctuations, to which commerce are liable, repeatedly produce disastrous consequences to the holders of property. The avarice of despotic kings, national changes, and various other causes issue in raising up needy adventurers to rank and affluence, and in bringing down the rich and powerful to poverty and destitution, volcanic eruptions, earthquakes, hurricanes, &c., produce effects, which declare with a loud voice, "*the fashion of this world passeth away*"—but in the day of Judgment, every individual soul of the redeemed, will receive "*A Kingdom which cannot be moved*;" "*an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for them.*" As the Lord liveth, every one of his people, even those that would have gladly received the crumbs, that fall from the tables of the rich, like Lazarus; and that begged on the public highways, like the blind man of Jericho,—all of them shall receive an everlasting inheritance in heaven. The grantor will be Jesus Christ, himself; and the title to this estate, as well as the meetness to enjoy it, will be conveyed in these benign and gracious terms. "Come, ye blessed of my father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world."

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But, we must now turn to the consequences, which this sentence shall produce in the wicked. We have been following the pillar of light, with a bounding step, and a glad heart; but now we must follow the pillar of cloud, at a slow pace, and with a subdued spirit. We have endeavoured to soar up to heaven, on the pinion of contemplation; and now we must strive to go down towards hell, by the intensity of reflection. We have been attempting to delineate the pleasures which God hath reserved for the redeemed; and now we must essay to image forth the miseries, which he hath prepared for the condemned. I shall say nothing of the remorse, the self-condemnation, the incurable anguish and despair, and the other mental tortures, which like so many vipers, shall perpetually gnaw at the souls of the damned. Nor shall I harrow your feelings, by alluding to the burning thirst, the maddening rage, the consuming malice, the torturing fury, or the insatiable desire of revenge, which shall continually heap coals of fire on their head. No—nor shall I grieve you by a feeble effort to describe the devouring sorrow, they shall endure, at beholding the mercies they despised—the invitations they refused, and the privileges they neglected, constantly stalking before them as the upbraiding ghosts of the opportunities they murdered.

Turning from these poignant, but wholesome reflections, we observe that the sentence, which shall be delivered at "THE JUDGMENT SEAT OF CHRIST," will *excommunicate the wicked from the Church triumphant*. This will be a sore and heavy punishment; and the very words, in which the sentence of expulsion will be pronounced, shall ring through their souls as the funeral knell of their salvation. To be excluded publicly, from a church, or Christian society, on earth, is a grievous calamity; and in some churches of high ecclesiastical pretensions, this ceremony is performed under appalling circumstances. The service book is shut, to signify that the name of the proscribed person is blotted out of the book of life; the lights are extinguished to denote his being given up to the blackness of darkness; and the bells are rung to publish the death of his soul. The case of the denounced person, however, is not utterly hopeless; if he repent and turn unto God, his re-admittance into the Church will follow. If he come with an humble and a contrite spirit; and in the exercise of faith in Christ, he will be received with gladness, and the whole church will rejoice over him, as the father of the prodigal rejoiced over his reformed son. But the sentence of excommunication that shall issue from the lips of Jesus Christ, in the day of Judgment, shall never be revoked. It shall remain in full force for ever; and during all eternity, it shall separate the soul from the hope of pardon, from the means of reconciliation, from the company of God, from the society of the LAMB, from the communion of the SPIRIT, from the fellowship of the SAINTS, and from any "part or lot" in "THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY AND CHURCH OF THE FIRST-BORN, WHICH ARE WRITTEN IN HEAVEN."



This sentence will further develope itself, in banishing the wicked from the presence of God for ever.

This is a sore and grievous punishment, nor can any heart, however deeply sunk in affliction, form an adequate conception of the blighting effects, which this expulsion will produce. The presence of God is the fulness of joy—the perfection of happiness—the consummation of bliss—and the complete fruition of every imaginable good. The divine presence is the river, the streams whereof, maketh glad the city of God; it is the tree of life that groweth in the midst of the garden, and the leaves of which, are for the healing of the nations; it is the sacrament of piety, the sign of unity, the bond of charity, and the hidden manna, upon which the saints shall feed for ever. The rays of beauty and glory, which proceed from the presence of God, illuminate the holy city, so that it needs neither sun, nor moon; and in this effulgence, all the hosts of the redeemed bathe themselves as in a sea of light; and its reflection imparteth lustre to their crowns, while it perpetuates the bloom of their palm branches, and the purity of their white robes. But to sum up all in a word—the presence of the holy and blessed God contains all the renewed heart can long for; every thing which the sanctified soul can desire; and whatsoever is essential to the endless felicity of the glorified spirit.

But from all these comforts, privileges, and honours, the wicked will be excluded for ever. To be driven from the land of our nativity, by the insulted spirit of the laws, or to be expelled from the home of our childhood, by an indignant father; to be sent into the wide world, an outcast and a reproach, far from home and all its endearments, the mark of public infamy written upon our foreheads, a sense of our shame and loss, rankling in the heart, and a father's curse withering and crushing the soul—these were terrible punishments, but they could only last during life time; and the brevity of their duration, with the assurance of being one day released from them, would soften their rigour and render them endurable. But the banishment of the damned will have no termination, the period of their exile shall never conclude; the smoke of their torments shall envelope them for ever, and through this, no beam of hope, no ray of comfort shall ever penetrate, for they *“shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power.”* And during all eternity, the sentence of the man that appeared without a wedding garment, shall be an impassable gulf, separating them from the joys and blessings of God's presence. *“Bind him hand and foot and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”*

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Finally—This sentence shall plunge them into the everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.

Such, my brethren, are the plain and explicit terms, in which Jesus Christ himself couches this appalling decision,* nor can we by the expedien-
cies of sophistry, or the verbiage of false criticism, or the mysteries of physiology, or the chicanery "*of science falsely so called*," either alter the meaning of this sentence, or escape from its power. Where is the wise? where is the scribe? where is the disputer of this world? These may go on darkening "*counsel by words without knowledge*." They may discover their ignorance, by attempting to display their knowledge, and convince us that they are pedants, while they are trying to persuade us that they are scholars." "Unreasonable and wicked men" may remove the ancient landmarks, and set up false beacons of their own construction, which may lead the unwary and the thoughtless, into the vortex of immorality and infidelity here; and thence into the gulf of endless misery hereafter; but the word of God shall endure for ever. He spoke and it was done; he commanded and it stood fast. He who made all things out of nothing, can alter the laws, and change the constitution of nature; yea, and he will do it, for there shall be "*a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth shall pass away; and there shall be no more sea*." Again, these bodies which are "*sown in dishonour*," shall be "*raised in glory*;" the natural body shall become a spiritual body; and the corruptible body shall become an incorruptible and immortal body, and death shall be swallowed up in victory.

Surely then, if God can communicate to the bodies of the Just, a capacity for enjoying everlasting happiness, he can, with equal facility, impart to the fire of hell, an endless duration; and to the bodies of the damned, a power to sustain, the agony and torture it inflicts. The voice of God says it shall be so—our consciences cry aloud, and declare that it is so—and the damned in their weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth, say unto us this evening, "*Perish the deceived, God is not mocked; the wicked shall be turned into hell; every transgressor shall be plunged into the fire that can never be quenched; and all impenitent sinners, shall have their part in the lake, that burneth with fire and brimstone, which is the second death*."

While contemplating the doom of the wicked, a melancholy feeling comes upon my soul; and an undefinable sensation grieves my spirit and agitates my heart. I see hell, in the form of an immense prison, emerging from the deep—deep ocean of God's wrath, as the apostle "*saw the beast rise up out of the sea*;" I see dark heavy

* Matt. xxv : 41.

shadows reflected from its frowning and insurmountable walls—I see its innumerable dungeons filled with flaming fire—I see multitudes of wretched creatures loaded with chains, in the midst of these fiery billows. Some of them are cursing God, and abusing the saints, and disparaging heaven; others are imploring annihilation, and anon crying out for a drop of water to cool their tongues; and all of them are weeping as if their hearts would break into pieces. The long loud echo of their shrieks and cries reverberates through every cell, and vault, and cavern of their prison-house, tolling like a hoarse funeral bell, proclaiming that the soul of hope and expectation is dead. I see their spirits bowed down with unavailing sorrow; I see their hearts heaving in the convulsions of remorse; I hear the long deep-drawn sobbings of their despair; the smoke of their torments is ascending; they have rest neither day nor night; and the consciousness of having brought all this misery on themselves, fills them with ungovernable rage, and incessantly gnaws their hearts, as if a thousand vipers were devouring them.

Some of these miserable creatures, were formerly holy angels, and they dwelt with God in palaces of ivory and gold; but now they dwell in dungeons of fire and brimstone. Once they were clothed in garments "brighter than the noon-day sun," but now they are attired in robes of flame. Others lived on earth, and were like ourselves; they formed part of the congregations as we do now; and heard the gospel preached to them as we do at present;—but they rejected the salvation that was offered to them; they preferred the pleasures of the world to the mortifications of the cross; they thought of every thing but the one thing needful; they did nothing but treasure up to themselves wrath, and now they feel the day of wrath, and revelation of the righteous judgment of God: and their sufferings shall continue as long as the Almighty will retain his being; and their misery shall run parallel with the happiness of the Just. "*Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.*"

But the predestined hour has at length arrived; the time has come when all must appear before "THE JUDGMENT SEAT OF CHRIST." Behold then—see—a thousand cataracts of fire are rolling down from heaven; the firmament is torn into shreds; the dome of the world is fallen in; the pillars that supported time are tottering; the stars are darting in wild disorder through the sky; the sun is striving to rush from its orbit; the moon is being turned into blood; the sea and the waves are roaring; the gates of hell are trembling; the powers of heaven are shaking; the everlasting doors are lifting up their heads; and lo, Jesus in "a chariot and horses of fire"—and attended by "the innumerable company of angels," is issuing forth. He ascends "THE JUDGMENT SEAT," the angel sounds his trumpet; the dead are coming out of their

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graves ; the drowned are emerging from the sea ; hell is disgorging the damned ; and heaven is sending forth the redeemed ; the books are opened ; the sentence is past ; some are driven into hell, calling upon the rocks and the mountains to fall upon them ; and others are carried up to heaven, ascribing salvation to him that sitteth upon the throne, and to the Lamb for ever.

And now my beloved, the vision is sealed—the prophecy is fulfilled—the vale of Judgment is a waste, and creation's doom is sealed. Look—an angel is coming ; he locks up hell ; he dashes the keys into the ocean of eternity : exclaiming—God is revenged ; the enemies of Christ are vanquished ; the dragon and the false prophet are burned with fire ; the wicked are cast into hell, and the saints shall reign with Messiah FOR EVER AND EVER. AMEN.

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